Inquiry into allegation of corruption in Haj Committee

†536. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHEND1A: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for making repeated allegation of corruption in Haj Committee and reasons for not conducting an inquiry into the loopholes;

(b) whether Government are taking any action on the demand of Central Haj Committee to conduct an inquiry by CBI into mattters relating to Haj;

(c) whether there is any proposal to provide additional facilities alongwith increasing the number of centres; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH):(a) and (b) Government is aware of unsubstantiated allegations of corruption in the working of the Central Haj Committee. Haj-2001 was completed successfully. The arrangements were appreciated by the Saudi authorities, as well as Goodwill Delegation sent by Government of India during the Haj. There is, therefore, no proposal for any enquiry.

(c) and (d) The provision of additional facilities and embarkation points are under constant review and are implemented subject to their feasibility.

Extradition Treaty between India and Germany

537. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Germany have signed an extradition treaty; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) An Extradition Treaty between India and Germany was signed at Berlin on 27th June, 2001. The salient features of the Treaty are as under:

(i) Any person who is accused of or convicted for an extraditable offence in the Requesting State and found in the Requested State may be extradited to the Requesting State.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(ii) Any offence punishable with imprisonment or deprivation of liberty for a period of one year or more will be an extraditable offence.

(iii) Extradition shall not be granted for political offences. The Treaty contains a list of offences which will not be considered as offences of a political character.

(iv) The Contracting States are not bound to extradite their own nationals, and they would be prosecuted by the Requested State in respect of the offencc(s) in question.

Chinese plan to lay railway line in Lhasa

†538. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China is laying down or have decided to lay down the highest railway line of the world upto Lhasa;

(b) if so, what would be its impact on different works including security of the country and whether Government have lodged any objection with China; and

(c) if so, Chinese reaction and decision thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir. China is constructing a railway line from Golmud in Qinghai Province to Lhasa.

(b) and (c) Government has taken note of this development Government remains vigilant and takes all necessary and appropriate measures to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of India.

Visa relaxation to Pakistani Nationals

539. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have further given relaxation of the visa regime for Pakistani nationals recently aimed at winning Pakistani hearts and to improve trade relations;

(b) if so, the details thereof

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.